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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDED ADDRESSEE)

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [PP](#) [MNUC](#) [IAEA](#) [AORC](#) [IR](#) [MO](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAN SCORES POINTS IN DEBATE: "NUCLEAR IRAN: WAR  
AND PEACE"

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11. (SBU) Summary: Some Iranian arguments resonated with students at a debate, "Nuclear Iran: War and Peace," held on November 23 at a graduate school in Rabat. Iran,s Ambassador argued for Iran,s right to nuclear technologies, including uranium enrichment, citing sovereign right, peaceful intent, and economic necessity. Mark Fitzpatrick, a "think-tanker" and former DAS, warned of the hazards of an enrichment-capable Iran, raising Iran,s lack of transparency, military intent, and the exorbitant cost of the program. The mainly student Moroccan audience displayed a slightly pro-Iranian tilt. Questions focused on the double standard issue: that the U.S. and the IAEA hold Iran to a higher standard of scrutiny for its nuclear activities than they do for Israel. End summary.

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Iran Nuclear Debate  
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12. (SBU) On November 23, Poloff attended a public debate entitled "Nuclear Iran: War and Peace" held at the Institute for Graduate Studies in Management (HEM) in Rabat that warned of the hazards of an enrichment-capable Iran. Professor Mohamed Reza-Djalili of the Graduate School of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, provided an overview of Iran,s geo-strategic position as context for the debate, while Professor Benmessaoud Abdelmoughit from Mohammed V University (in Rabat) moderated.

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Iran,s Case for Nuclear Capabilities  
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13. (SBU) Iranian Ambassador Ahmadi,s presentation rested on several arguments, including Iran,s sovereign right to develop nuclear technologies (including uranium enrichment), its peaceful intent, transparency, and its need for nuclear energy. Ahmadi said that Iran had no place for nuclear arms in its military doctrine and had always supported international initiatives to make the Middle East a nuclear weapon free zone. He said that Iran had signed the NPT Additional Protocol; thus opening itself to unhindered UN inspections (to include 26 military facilities); turned over 1000 pages of nuclear-program related documents to the UN; agreed to additional UN provisions concerning plutonium; and cooperated fully with the IAEA, selectively quoting from the latest IAEA report.

14. (SBU) Ahmadi said that Iran would one day exhaust its petroleum resources and needed a long-term, environmentally sound energy source, adding that it needed the independent ability to enrich uranium because of a history of foreign interference. Specifically, he complained that Western powers like the U.S. and Germany once supported Iran,s nuclear development until the Iranian Revolution in 1979. When this support ended, Ahmadi recalled, companies such as Siemens confiscated millions of dollars worth of Iranian-purchased nuclear-related equipment.

15. (SBU) Ahmadi said that sanctions would only reinforce Iran,s determination to develop a completely self-sufficient nuclear program. He complained that the U.S. and Israel were in the process of distorting international public opinion against Iran and accused these powers of exerting blatant interference within the IAEA, which portrayed Iran in a distorted light. Ahmadi also called Israel a nuclear threat to the world and in contrast to Israel,s nuclear program, Iran,s has always been under IAEA supervision.

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Con-Iran Argument  
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16. (SBU) Senior Fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London Mark Fitzgerald (a former DAS) prefaced his remarks by saying he did not represent the U.S. government. Fitzpatrick said that the current impasse with Iran might be solved diplomatically but that he feared that war between the U.S. and Iran was possible. He said that he believes that Iran is seeking nuclear technology, not for energy, but for military use. Fitzpatrick underscored that the issue at hand is not about denying Iran access to nuclear energy but about concern about Iran enriching uranium on its own. He said that that the Bush Administration has repeatedly expressed its desire to solve the impasse peacefully, but after five years of negotiations, Iran continues to remain uncooperative. Underscoring this point,

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Fitzpatrick said that the Bush administration changed policy in 2005, accepting Iran's right to pursue nuclear energy, and worked with the P5 1 to offer Iran a package of credible incentives in June 2006 to curb enrichment, but to no avail.

17. (SBU) Fitzpatrick then listed Iran's 18-year track record of non-proliferation treaty violations, underscored in a 2003 IAEA announcement and subsequent referral to the UN Security Council. He pointed out Iranian unwillingness to answer numerous questions pertaining to its nuclear program such as the Iranian military's involvement in its nuclear program, evidence of plutonium 210 experiments, Iranian black market nuclear activities, and a decreasing knowledge of Iran's nuclear activities had eroded international confidence in Iran's assertion that its program was strictly for peaceful purposes. In response to the sovereign right argument, Fitzpatrick said that sovereign rights can be denied, if there are international concerns about a country's negative intentions, or postponed until such time as international confidence is restored in a nation's behavior.

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False Economic argument  
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18. (SBU) Fitzpatrick called Iran's economic justifications or enrichment capacity illogical, underscoring the exorbitant costs of the infrastructure and Iran's massive petroleum reserves. He pointed out the numerous sources of enriched uranium throughout the world, which neutralize any Iranian-targeted embargo.

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Cascading Effect  
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19. (SBU) In response to a question from the crowd which posited Iran's right to nuclear arms as a counter-balance to Israel's nuclear capability, Fitzpatrick asserted that two wrongs do not make a right. He argued that other countries in the region such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey will likely develop their own nuclear weapons capability if they know Iran had one.

110. (SB) Our gauge of applause from the mainly Moroccan student crowd indicated a slightly pro-Iranian tilt. Several questions from the crowd focused on the alleged double standard issue: the notion that the U.S. and the IAEA hold Iran to a higher standard of scrutiny for its nuclear activities than they do for Israel. Whenever the discussion focused solely on Iranian compliance with the IAEA, Fitzpatrick appeared to score points with the crowd. However, it was apparent that the pro-Iran argument received the most support from the crowd when the discussion shifted to Israel.

111. (SBU) Comment: The organizer of the debate shared with us his skepticism about Iran's arguments. This debate, which was covered in the local press, was likely seen by the Iranians as a way to advance their public relations efforts in Morocco, an IAEA Board of Governors member. While they may have had some sympathy from the crowd, we believe that the discussion did not win Iran much new popular support. End comment.

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